

## Reconstructing the Redaction History of the Twelve Prophets: Problems and Models

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The *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* by Brevard S. Childs represents an important shift in the research on prophetic books.<sup>1</sup> In the legacy of Hermann Gunkel, the main interest had been in the small units which could be perceived as delivered in an oral setting. It was common to imagine the prophet standing somewhere in the streets confronting his hearers with the divinely inspired message. In his commentary on Hosea, for example, Hans W. Wolff considered many texts to be *Auftrittsskizzen*, written hastily during or immediately after the oral communication.<sup>2</sup> Wolff impressively presented Hosea, Amos, and Micah as participants in the social conflicts of their historic societies, trying to make the conflicting parties hear the unambiguous word of God. At the same time, he noted in his commentary on Amos that many passages, including important ones, were written by redactors from different times.<sup>3</sup> Since then, interest in the historical prophet has declined. Instead, the canonical prophetic book has become more and more important.<sup>4</sup> Prophetic books include the original prophetic oracles in such a fashion that it is, in most cases, almost impossible to reconstruct the oral set-

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<sup>1</sup> B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

<sup>2</sup> H. W. Wolff, *Hosea* (vol. 1 of *Dodekapropheten*; BKAT 14/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1961), xxv.

<sup>3</sup> Compare H. W. Wolff, *Joel und Amos* (3d ed.; vol. 2 of *Dodekapropheten*; BKAT 14/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1985), 129–38.

<sup>4</sup> As an example one may quote O. H. Steck, *Die Prophetenbücher und ihr theologisches Zeugnis: Wege der Nachfrage und Fährten zur Antwort* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), who states that “durch die heutige Zeit donnernder Amos seine unmittelbare Stunde längst gehabt habe” (124). In English, the quotation reads, “. . . Amos thundering through the present time, when his time has long since passed” (*The Prophetic Books and Their Theological Witness* [trans. James D. Nogalski; St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000], 114).

ting.<sup>5</sup> The final text is, for the most part, the result of many different redactional activities, which wanted to focus the prophetic claims on new generations. Within this new stream of research the fact was registered with fresh insight that, in antiquity, the Book of the Twelve Prophets was considered as one book. It seems appropriate to reserve the word “book” to denote the collection as a whole and to speak of the twelve units ascribed to different prophets as “writings.”<sup>6</sup>

### The Book of the Twelve as a Redactional Unit

E. Ben Zvi has vehemently disagreed that the Book of the Twelve was originally meant to be a unit.<sup>7</sup> He conceives of the book as a collection of writings, some of which may indeed manifest thematic overlaps, or even allude to one another, but which have no redactional sense as a whole. A reader may impinge meaning upon the whole, but one should be clear that this is not what the final redactors had in mind. They wanted to preserve the individual writings. Ben Zvi rightly emphasizes the problem of discerning that the redactors wanted to present the Twelve Prophets as part of a larger unity. The most unambiguous evidence is lacking: the Book of the Twelve has no superscription. So what else can be accepted as signal of redactional purpose?

Widely acknowledged is the *Stichwortverkettung* (catchword chain) phenomenon. F. Delitzsch noted that the ending of one writing and the beginning of the adjacent one often share significant vocabulary.<sup>8</sup> The following instances were considered significant: Hos 14:2 // Joel 2:12; Joel 4:16 // Amos 1:2; Amos 9:12 // Obad 19; Obad 1 // Jonah (as messenger to the nations); Jonah 4:2 // Mic 7:18–19 // Nah 1:2–3; Nah 1:1 // Hab 1:1 (מִשָּׂא); Hab 2:20 // Zeph 1:7. Some assumed that redactors grouped writings together that accidentally contained such *Stichwörter*. Others postulated that the *Stichwörter* were implemented to stitch together writings that the redactors wanted to place in sequence. This second hypothesis is strongly supported by J. Nogalski, who has thoroughly treated the *Stichwort* phenomenon and discovered *Stichwörter*

<sup>5</sup> Steck is very skeptical in this respect (ibid., 120–23).

<sup>6</sup> That is the way J. Nogalski has done it.

<sup>7</sup> E. Ben Zvi, “Twelve Prophetic Books or ‘The Twelve’? A Few Preliminary Considerations,” in *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* (ed. J. W. Watts and P. R. House; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 125–56.

<sup>8</sup> F. Delitzsch, “Wann weissagte Obadja?” *Zeitschrift für die gesammte Lutherische Theologie und Kirche* 12 (1851): 92–93.

that had been overlooked. For example, the inconspicuous word “time” (עת) connects Zeph 3:20 with Hag 1:2, 4. The glorious future envisioned in Zeph 3:9–20 is contrasted with the unsatisfactory state of the people living around the ruins of the temple.<sup>9</sup>

B. A. Jones and Ben Zvi doubt that the *Stichwörter* can provide evidence for the redactional linking. One problem is that shared vocabulary exists between writings that do not stand adjacent. Obadiah, for example, could as easily follow Joel 4:19 (where Edom is mentioned) as Amos 9:12, especially since the decisive term “Edom” in Amos 9:12 is (according to Jones) lacking in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint.<sup>10</sup> Jones and Ben Zvi rightly argue that in many cases the *Stichwörter* are not significant enough to preclude accidental allusion of the respective passages. The *Stichwörter*, however, especially if additional cases are found, are still valuable clues to the redactional plan. Most important are source-critical observations. If, to use a disputed example of Nogalski, almost all differences between Obadiah and its *Vorlage* in Jer 49 pick up vocabulary and themes present in Amos 9, it is probable that Obadiah was designed to fit into its position after Amos.<sup>11</sup> Jones too easily dismisses the arguments of Nogalski when he states: “Even if Nogalski’s conclusion is correct, however, that Obadiah has been shaped redactionally under the influence of Amos 9, again this may explain but does not *require* the arrangement of Amos and Obadiah in the MT Book of the Twelve. One should not be surprised that a relatively late book such as Obadiah has been influenced by the Book of Amos.”<sup>12</sup> It is unjustified to require this high degree of probability from the proponents of redactional unity only. For too long, the Book of the Twelve as a whole was ignored. One should challenge this commonly held reading by inverting the burden of proof and start with the assumption that the Book of the Twelve is a unit; the assumption should only be relinquished if the opposite can be demonstrated.<sup>13</sup>

A further question for detecting redactional intention is whether the reading process sees small units as parts of a global discourse structure. One has to ask, for example, if a unit presupposes a thought from a

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<sup>9</sup> J. D. Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 217; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 215.

<sup>10</sup> B. A. Jones, *The Formation of the Book of the Twelve: A Study in Text and Canon* (SBLDS 149; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 175–91.

<sup>11</sup> J. D. Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 218; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 61–74.

<sup>12</sup> Jones, *Formation of the Book of the Twelve*, 211–12.

<sup>13</sup> Steck, *Prophetenbücher*, 30.

previous text or uses a lexeme whose connotation was established in an earlier passage. Frames are also important. For example, Hosea starts with a *Fremdbericht* (Hos 1), and Amos included one in the final vision cycle (Amos 7:10–17). Likewise, a meaningful superstructure points toward a deliberate ordering, for example, the historical ordering of the writings with Hosea first (because it mentions the “House of Jehu” in Hos 1:4) and Malachi last (because it presupposes an operative second temple).<sup>14</sup>

### The Order of the Writings

Manuscript evidence of the Book of the Twelve has been investigated by Jones, Fuller, and Steck.<sup>15</sup> So far, three variants are known. In the Hebrew tradition, all manuscripts follow the Masoretic order with the exception of one of the oldest scrolls, 4QXII<sup>a</sup>, in which the most plausible reconstruction is that Jonah followed Malachi.<sup>16</sup> In the Septuagint tradition we find a third option. The first six writings are arranged Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah. Whether we have enough evidence to reconstruct the goal of the final redactors comes up again. Do the different variants signal that the order of the writings was meaningless, or, to the contrary, that the sequence was important to express a new understanding of the whole by the redactors and/or translators? The consensus so far is that the Masoretic order was the original one.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, Jones considers the Septuagint order to be older,<sup>18</sup> who states that the aim was to group writings similar in content; this is, for example, why Obadiah immediately follows Joel. The main problem with Jones’s hypothesis is that it does not explain how the Masoretic order came into being. Much more convincing is that the Septuagint placed Amos and Micah immediately after Hosea and left all other writings in

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<sup>14</sup> Compare A. Schart, *Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs: Neubearbeitungen von Amos im Rahmen schriftenerübergreifender Redaktionsprozesse* (BZAW 260; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 133–50.

<sup>15</sup> Jones (see n. 10); R. E. Fuller, “The Form and Formation of the Book of the Twelve: The Evidence from the Judean Desert,” in Watts and House, *Forming Prophetic Literature*, 86–101; O. H. Steck, “Zur Abfolge Maleachi–Jona in 4Q76 (4QXIIa),” *ZAW* 108 (1996): 249–53.

<sup>16</sup> Russell E. Fuller, “The Minor Prophets Manuscripts from Qumran, Cave IV,” in *The Prophets* (ed. Eugene Ulrich; vol. 10 of *Qumran Cave 4*; DJD 15; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 221–318 + plates xl–lxiv.

<sup>17</sup> D. A. Schneider, “The Unity of the Book of the Twelve” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1979), 224–25; Nogalski, *Precursors*, 2.

<sup>18</sup> Jones, *Formation of the Book of the Twelve*, 218–20.

the Masoretic order. The reason probably was the historical setting given by the superscriptions; since Hosea, Amos, and Micah prophesied partly under the same kings, they form a closed group to which Joel, Obadiah, and Jonah do not belong.

More convincing is Jones's hypothesis that the oldest order had Jonah after Malachi, as represented by 4QXII<sup>a</sup>. Since Jonah has a different position in each of the three variants, Jones argues that it came into the collection last.<sup>19</sup> One can imagine that this strange writing was first attached to the end of the collection, and, because Jonah ben Amittai had lived under Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:25), in a second step found its place close to the prophets from the eighth century.

### The Global Structure of the Twelve

If the Book of the Twelve is purposefully arranged, one should expect a coherent global structure that directs the reading process.<sup>20</sup> Most important in this respect are the beginnings of the writings, of which nine contain superscriptions.<sup>21</sup> Since the dated beginnings follow in historical sequence, the reader gets the impression that the collection intends to unfold part of the history of prophecy. The deepest break is between Zephaniah and Haggai, where the Babylonian exile is presupposed, but not mentioned.

According to P. House, the implied picture of the history of Israel follows the scheme "sin-punishment-restoration."<sup>22</sup> Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah belong to the first topic. These writings are mainly, although not exclusively, concerned with the sin of Israel and the nations. Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah describe the punishment for that sin. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi envision the restoration of Israel within the nations. Although House's description of the global

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 129–69; Schart, *Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*, 290.

<sup>20</sup> T. Collins, *The Mantle of Elijah: The Redaction Criticism of the Prophetic Books* (The Biblical Seminar 20; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 65; P. R. House, *The Unity of the Twelve* (Bible and Literature Series 27; JSOTSup 97; Sheffield: Almond, 1990), 67–71.

<sup>21</sup> Schart only wants to speak of a superscription if "die Informationen, die sie enthält, auf einer Metaebene zum restlichen Textkorpus liegen und sie weder grammatisch noch semantisch eine lineare Anknüpfung an den folgenden Text aufweist" (*Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*, 32). "The information that [the superscription] contains transcends the rest of the corpus, while, grammatically and syntactically, it shows no linear connection to the following text" [editor's translation]. This is true only for Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1; Amos 1:1; Obad 1a; Mic 1:1; Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1; Zeph 1:1; and Mal 1:1.

<sup>22</sup> House, *Unity of the Twelve*, 63–109.

structure of the Twelve contains many insights into the intertextual relationships among the different writings, his scheme seems too imprecise.<sup>23</sup> At first glance, it is obvious that all three, sin, punishment, and restoration, are part of all the single writings. Malachi, for example, contains more numerous and more specific accusations than Joel. As a result, it is difficult to limit the aim of Joel to disclosing the sin of Israel or to limit the aim of Malachi to Israel's restoration.<sup>24</sup>

T. Collins presents a more complex model. He identifies a set of recurring themes. "The principal themes of the whole book are those of covenant-election, fidelity and infidelity, fertility and infertility, turning and returning, the justice of God and the mercy of God, the kingship of God, the place of his dwelling (Temple/Mt. Zion), the nations as enemies, the nations as allies."<sup>25</sup> Every prophet adds to the topics, sometimes in accordance, sometimes in opposition to other writings. Collins tries to find the unity which can make sense of all the different aspects. How this works may be illustrated from passages dealing with the temple. Hosea accuses the temple of northern Israel of idolatry, because a calf is worshiped there. In contrast, Joel's call to repentance makes clear that the true worship of YHWH is taking place at the temple in Jerusalem. It is not until Mic 3:12 that the temple on Mount Zion is condemned. Immediately thereafter, however, it is envisioned that Mount Zion will once again be the center of the world, to which all nations will come spontaneously in order to accept the Torah as the way to universal peace. Zephaniah 3:9–20 further explores this topic. In order to fulfill its eschatological responsibility, Mount Zion must be cleansed and must be the home of holy community. This thought sets the stage for Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Zechariah 8, especially, which once formed the end of a smaller collection, reminds the reader of Zeph 3 (cf. Zech 8:3 with Zeph 3:11, 15). Malachi then recognizes that the promised, glorious

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<sup>23</sup> As examples of observations, which have been picked up by others, one may name the following: House perceives the summons to hear in Hos 4:1 as the opening of an accusation speech, which ends in Mic 6:2–16. In both passages the lexeme *ryb* (lawsuit) plays an important role (ibid., 87; cf. Schart, *Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*, 191–92). Another observation is that the prominent role that the "love of God" plays in Malachi refers back to Hosea (House, *Unity of the Twelve*, 108; cf. Collins, *Mantle of Elijah*, 81).

<sup>24</sup> House does implicitly admit the difficulty: "Unlike the recipients of Hosea's condemnation, the sin of God's people in Joel is much more subtle. Judgment is fast approaching, but is not coming because of an obvious rejection of Yahweh and a subsequent embracing of idolatry. Rather, the religion pictured in Joel has lost its vitality. The Lord and His presence are taken for granted" (*Unity of the Twelve*, 76).

<sup>25</sup> Collins, *Mantle of Elijah*, 65.

future of Zion “is still impeded by the unworthy behaviour of the priests in the temple, the very place where God’s name should be honored most.”<sup>26</sup> Collins’s model is certainly more complex than House’s model, but it does more justice to the variety of topics and to the sometimes striking differences between writings than to the unity.

A prominent topic of the Twelve is the Day of YHWH. No other prophetic book contains as many passages about this day, which are at the same time central for the overall structure. In addition, the Day of YHWH is the concept which integrates basic topics into one scenario. Joel impressively introduces the Day of YHWH into the collection, and the reader is forced to follow within this framework.<sup>27</sup> Amos 5:18–20 implies that the opponents of Amos are longing for the Day of YHWH. Since Amos himself never spoke about this day, the hearers must know about it from elsewhere. From the perspective of the reader of the Twelve, it is obvious that the opponents have already heard Joel’s message. From reading in this manner, one gets the impression that the contemporaries of Amos used Joel’s prophecy to evade the call to turn back to God (Amos 5:4–6, 14–15). How they evaded the call is not spelled out. Amos restates the severe scenario of Joel: for those who do not repent, the coming day will bring complete darkness. Likewise, this reading sets the stage for understanding the Day of YHWH in Obad 18, where it is announced that the “House of Jacob” will burn the “House of Esau.” According to Amos 5 and 9:8–10, this eschatological “House of Jacob” will comprise only those who did not reject the message of Amos and who, at the same time, belong to those persons called by God, as stated in Joel 3:5. Rendtorff rightly observes that the nearness of the Day of YHWH inspires a call to repentance (Joel 2:12–14; Amos 5:4–6, 14–15; Zeph 2:1–3; Mal 3:24). The reader may also infer that every reference to a decisive day, on which YHWH will punish sin and restore the true Israel — for example, “on that day” (Amos 2:16; 8:3) or “day of trouble” (Nah 1:7) — points toward the one Day of YHWH.

R. C. van Leeuwen observes how the first six writings make use of Exod 34:6–7, a text that contains “an elaboration of the name YHWH expressing the bipolar attributes of mercy and retributive justice.”<sup>28</sup> The first allusion he sees already in Hos 1:6, where it is unambiguously

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>27</sup> R. Rendtorff, “Alas for the day! The ‘Day of the LORD’ in the Book of the Twelve,” in *God in the Fray: A Tribute to Walter Brueggemann* (ed. Tod Linafelt and Timothy K. Beal; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 186–97.

<sup>28</sup> R. C. van Leeuwen, “Scribal Wisdom and Theodicy in the Book of the Twelve,”

declared that the merciful character of God is no longer operative. However, Hos 14:10 implies that the wise know that God forgives those who repent. The redactors seem to exploit the tension God's between mercy and justice in order to show that different prophets emphasized various attributes of the very same God. Joel 2:12 cites Exod 34:6–7. Jonah cites the same verse in 3:9 and 4:2. Micah cites it in 2:8 (conjectured) and 7:18–20. Finally, Nahum cites Exod 34:6–7 in 1:2–3a. The tensions between the different writings are deeply rooted within God. Only a multiplicity of approaches does justice to the mystery of God's personality.

The Book of the Twelve shares certain features with the book of Isaiah. One may note, for example, that the Judean kings listed in Isa 1:1 (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah) are identical with the ones listed in Hos 1:1. Also, Isa 2:2–4 and Mic 4:1–4 are almost identical. For these and other reasons Bosshard-Nepustil has closely examined the relationship between both books. It is remarkable how many cross-references he detects in different layers. He proposes that the main redactions in the Book of the Twelve, which he calls the "Assur/Babel-Redaktion<sup>XII</sup>" and the "Babel-Redaktion<sup>XII</sup>," were influenced by similar redactions in the book of Isaiah.<sup>29</sup> Although he tries to display his results in well-structured tables, the sheer complexity of his reconstructions is overwhelming. Many of his source-critical decisions appear problematic, and one often has the feeling that the intertextual allusions cannot be controlled.

### **Models for the Redaction History of the Book of the Twelve**

There is no question that a simple synchronic approach is insufficient. The superscriptions already make it unambiguously clear that the different writings originated in different centuries. All of the redaction-critical models proposed so far assume that smaller collections predated the final book. It is highly unlikely from the outset that twelve independent books were combined for the first time in Hellenistic times.

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in *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie* (ed. L. G. Perdue, B. B. Scott, and W. J. Wiseman; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 32.

<sup>29</sup> E. Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1–39 im Zwölfprophetenbuch: Untersuchungen zur literarischen Verbindung von Prophetenbüchern in babylonischer und persischer Zeit* (OBO 154; Fribourg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), summary on p. 408.



R. E. Wolfe was the first to propose that thirteen redactional layers, which he differentiates, worked across the boundaries of the individual writings. This is why he labels his model a “strata hypothesis.”<sup>30</sup> A notable layer, for example, is the “Day of Jahwe Editor,” which contains the following passages: “in Amos 4:12b (from עֶקֶב); 5:13, 18c (from הָוֵא), 20; Obad 15a (to הַגִּיִּים); Joel 1:15; 2:1d (from כִּי)–2b (to וְעַרְפֵּל), 10–11; 3:1–5 (Eng., 2:28–32); 4:1–3, 12, 14–17 (Eng., 3:1–3, 12, 14–17); Zeph 1:7–8a (to יְהוָה), 14–16.18c (from בַּיּוֹם); 2:1–3; 3:8b–e (from חֲזוֹן)” (103). Thus, almost every passage containing the phrase “Day of YHWH” belongs to this layer. Wolfe discerns four steps in the redaction. First, Amos and Hosea were combined. Second, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah were added, yielding a collection of the six preexilic prophecies. Third, a “Book of the Nine” developed by the insertion of Joel, Jonah, and Obadiah. The book became complete with the addition of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

D. A. Schneider thinks along similar lines.<sup>31</sup> The basis, according to Schneider, was the collection of Hosea, Amos, and Micah in the time of Hezekiah. Under Josiah’s rule, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah were attached. During the exile, Joel, Obadiah, and Jonah entered the collection. Finally, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were added in the time of Nehemiah.

Nogalski attributes the most extensive redactional activity to the “Joel-related layer.” This redaction combined a preexisting “Deuteronomistic Corpus” (Hosea-Amos-Micah-Zephaniah) with Nahum, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zech 1–8, Joel, Obadiah, and Malachi. Subsequently, Jonah and Zech 9–14 entered the collection.<sup>32</sup>

Schart assumes more steps, in which the collection continually grew. First, Hosea and Amos were combined. For the next step he agrees with Nogalski that there must have been a corpus consisting of Hosea-Amos-Micah-Zephaniah. Then Nahum and Habakkuk were inserted. After that, Haggai and Zech 1–8 were attached. Subsequently, Joel, Obadiah, and Zech 9–14 were added. Finally, Jonah, as a satirical narrative, and Malachi completed the book.<sup>33</sup>

The main difficulty for all the different models is establishing controls about what is considered deliberate redactional shaping and what

<sup>30</sup> R. E. Wolfe, “The Editing of the Book of the Twelve,” *ZAW* 53 (1935): 91.

<sup>31</sup> “Unity of the Book of the Twelve” (see n. 17).

<sup>32</sup> See his summaries: Nogalski, *Precursors*, 276–82; *Processes*, 274–80.

<sup>33</sup> See Schart’s summary, *Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*, 304–6.

is only accidentally connected. Which features should be construed as important goals of the final text, and which should be viewed as less significant? It seems wise to begin reconstruction of the redaction history with those passages which most obviously stem from editors: the superscriptions.<sup>34</sup> Given that starting point, it is most plausible that Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah once existed as a separate collection. The superscriptions of these four writings follow the same pattern, and, through the names of the kings mentioned, they convey the following scenario: First, Hosea and Amos prophesied simultaneously in the northern kingdom; thereafter, Hosea and Micah prophesied at the same time in Judah.<sup>35</sup> The writing of Hosea was deliberately placed in the first position, although the historical prophet Amos probably delivered his oracles earlier than Hosea. The redactors wanted the reader to perceive the writing of Amos in the light of Hosea, presumably because they were committed to Hosea's theological position. Some have used the concept "Deuteronomistic" to characterize these redactors.<sup>36</sup> This seems unwise, since typical Deuteronomistic language can only rarely be identified, for example, in Amos 3:7 ("his servants the prophets").<sup>37</sup> To be more cautious, one may speak of a redaction that inserted passages in addition to the superscriptions, passages which come close to Deuteronomistic thoughts.<sup>38</sup> Scharf, especially, has pulled together numerous observations which have already been made concerning this redaction.<sup>39</sup> The central point is that all transgressions were conceived as conducted directly against God. The root of all evil is the distortion of the personal relationship to YHWH that was es-

<sup>34</sup> See already G. M. Tucker: "It is all but self-evident that the superscriptions were not created by the prophets themselves. They refer in the third person, and retrospectively, to the activity of the prophet, and to the books which contain the prophetic words" ("Prophetic Superscriptions and the Growth of a Canon," in *Canon and Authority: Essays in OT Religion and Theology* [ed. G. W. Coats and B. O. Long; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977], 65).

<sup>35</sup> D. N. Freedman, "Headings in the Books of the Eighth-Century Prophets," *AUSS* 25 (1987): 16–20; Collins, *Mantle of Elijah*, 62; Nogalski, *Precursors*, 84–89; Scharf, *Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*, 41–46.

<sup>36</sup> W. H. Schmidt, "Die deuteronomistische Redaktion des Amosbuchs: Zu den theologischen Unterschieden zwischen dem Prophetenwort und seinem Sammler," *ZAW* 77 (1965): 171; Nogalski, *Precursors*, 86–88.

<sup>37</sup> See the critique of Schmidt by N. Lohfink, "Gab es eine deuteronomistische Bewegung?" in *Studien zum Deuteronomium und zur deuteronomistischen Literatur III* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995), 65–142.

<sup>38</sup> Collins, *Mantle of Elijah*, 62; Scharf, *Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*, 46.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Schmidt, "Deuteronomistische Redaktion," 191–92; Scharf, *Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*, 218–33.

tablished through the exodus. In order to underscore the last point, the redactors, at crucial points of the composition, inserted passages referring to the exodus (Amos 2:10; 3:2; 9:7; Mic 6:4–5). Social, cultic, or juridical degeneration is seen as the result of the fundamental corruption of the identity of Israel, which is determined by the exodus. It is remarkable that the redaction also reflected on the role of the prophets within God's history with Israel and Judah (Amos 2:11–12; 3:7).

If one asks for precursors to this corpus, it can be argued convincingly that the writings of Hosea and Amos once formed a single composition. J. Jeremias in particular has proposed this hypothesis.<sup>40</sup> On the one hand, there are additions in the writing of Hosea that pick up language from Amos. The second half of Hos 4:15 uses words from Amos 4:4; 5:5; and 8:14. Hosea 8:14 is closely related to Amos 3:9–11 and 6:8. The passages appear at positions at which a reader from Judah possibly could perceive the transgressions of northern Israel as something that would never happen in Judah. However, the aim of the redactional additions is to counteract those reactions. On the other hand, there are verses like Amos 3:2; 7:9; 2:8; 5:25; 6:8; and 1:5, which are heavily loaded with vocabulary and topics from the writing of Hosea. Almost all of these redactional passages are located at important points in the composition of Amos. This implies that Amos, even at an early stage, must already have been designed with the ideas of Hosea in mind. Schart has further pursued this insight.<sup>41</sup> In his view, the same redactors edited both writings as a single composition. The overall structure was governed by the summons to hear (Hos 4:1; 5:1; Amos 3:1; 4:1; 5:1). In both writings the prophet first addresses "the Israelites" (Hos 4:1; Amos 3:1) and secondly the "House of Israel" (Hos 5:1; Amos 5:1). The writings were combined in order to convince the reader that these prophecies of doom are truly the word of God. Schart points toward the letters from Mari, which show that the authority of oracle, especially unfavorable oracles, could be strengthened if a second oracle, independently uttered by a different speaker, confirmed the message of the first one.

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<sup>40</sup> J. Jeremias, "Die Anfänge des Dodekapropheten: Hosea und Amos," *Hosea und Amos: Studien zu den Anfängen des Dodekapropheten* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 34–54. Compare already Wolfe, "Editing of the Book of the Twelve," 91–93; Schneider, "Unity of the Book of the Twelve," 23; Schmidt, "Deuteronomistische Redaktion," 173.

<sup>41</sup> Schart, *Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*, 101–55.

As a redactional stage later than the corpus which comprised Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah, there must have been something like a “Joel-related layer,” which formed a corpus at the core of which stood the Day of YHWH passages. After some forerunners, it was Nogalski who put together strong and fascinating arguments for this stage in the formation of the book.<sup>42</sup> Besides large parts of Joel, this layer probably contained a version of Obadiah. According to Nogalski, little glosses dealing with locusts and the fertility of the land were also inserted in older writings to recall the vivid picture of Joel 1–2, for example, Nah 3:15a?, 16b, and Hab 3:16b–17. However, it seems difficult to find out exactly how many writings and passages this Joel-related layer comprised. Although Wolfe, Nogalski, Bosshard-Nepustil, and Schart agree that there was something like a “Day-of-YHWH layer,” which contained a large part of Joel, these authors differ considerably. This problem is closely related to problems in the last phase of the redaction history of the Book of the Twelve. Did the collection of the Joel-related layer end with an earlier version of Malachi, which was attached to Zech 8, as Nogalski proposes?<sup>43</sup> Or did it conclude with Zech (9–)14, with Malachi entering later, as Schart prefers? In any case, Jonah was likely the last independent writing to be added. In this respect Nogalski and Schart agree with Jones, who argues from the manuscript evidence that because Jonah’s position within the sequence of the Twelve is different in all three variants, it was probably added last. Over the last decades a strong consensus has emerged that Mal 3:22–24 was added to the Book of the Twelve as a conclusion to the second part of the Hebrew canon, the “Nebiim.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Nogalski, *Processes*, 275–78. See, for example, Wolfe, with his proposed “Day-of-YHWH editor,” and E. Bosshard-Nepustil, “Beobachtungen zum Zwölfprophetenbuch,” *BN* 40 (1987): 30–62.

<sup>43</sup> Bosshard-Nepustil, Kratz, and Steck suggest an even more complex connection between Zechariah and Malachi (E. Bosshard-Nepustil and R. G. Kratz, “Maleachi im Zwölfprophetenbuch,” *BN* 52 [1990]: 27–46; O. H. Steck, *Der Abschluß der Prophetie im Alten Testament: Ein Versuch zur Frage der Vorgeschichte des Kanons* [Biblich-Theologische Studien 17; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1991]). They argue that prior versions of Malachi originally were designed as extensions of former versions of Zech 9–14. The superscription, Mal 1:1, came later, and the original cohesion was interrupted.

<sup>44</sup> W. Rudolph, *Haggai, Sacharja, Maleachi* (KAT 13/4; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1976), 291; Nogalski, *Processes*, 185; Steck, *Abschluß*, 134–36; Schart, *Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*, 302–3.

### **Hermeneutical Implications**

These new insights into the redaction history of the Book of the Twelve change the way in which the meaning of the whole and its parts can be construed.<sup>45</sup>

First, the well-known fact should again be emphasized that the original words of the historical prophets underwent a deep transformation within the literary transmission. Without the different redactors, the first written records would have been left in an archive. With their adaptation, these records became an unparalleled body of literature, which played an important role in the interaction between Israel and its God. The ongoing rewriting of the prophetic heritage certifies that the prophetic collections were successful in mediating the word of God into different historical situations. In this respect, the prophetic books pursued the function of the original prophets.

A second well-known fact may also be stressed. The literary remains of the preexilic prophets were mostly shaped under the impression that the original oracles had been fulfilled. The exiles of northern Israel and Judah functioned as the basic proof for a precursor of the Book of the Twelve, which presumably contained at least Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah. However, the prophecies of doom also provoked the confident hope that God would once again bring peace and well-being to Israel within a renewed creation.

Third, from an early stage in the transmission process onward, prophetic oracles were perceived in light of the history of prophecy. One may already compare Jer 28:8, in which Jeremiah uses the conformity of his message with the prophetic tradition as an argument against his opponent. More important, the redactors sought to present the prophets as a coherent whole. New prophecy had to demonstrate how it was related to the literary prophetic tradition. This does not mean that the prophetic messages remained unchanged, but every new prophecy had to be conceived as picking up and expanding aspects of the tradition under the pressure of new experiences of God.

Fourth, the prophetic writings were transmitted as parts of collections. It is very likely that the redactors did expand and rewrite so that preexisting prophetic writings would articulate what the historical prophet, under whose name the redactors worked, would have said,

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<sup>45</sup> Steck deals extensively with the hermeneutical implications of the latest redaction-critical enterprises (*Prophetenbuecher*, 127–204). See also B. S. Childs, “Retrospective Reading of the Old Testament Prophets,” *ZAW* 108 (1996): 362–77.

if the prophet had been confronted with the problems of their own time. Whenever redactors were confronted with a new prophecy that could not be harmoniously integrated within the existing collection, a new writing was designed under a new author's name. In many cases, presumably, this writing circulated independently for a while before it was added to the existing group. Inclusion became possible when redactors could develop a theological position in which the differences between the older corpus and the new writings could either be integrated or become insignificant.<sup>46</sup> Within a given collection, the writings were combined in such a way that the meaning of the whole overruled the meaning that a certain text had in its original historical setting. The theological position held by the last redactors was inferred into every part of the collection. For example, within the Joel-related layer, all passages dealing with the Day of YHWH were interpreted as references to the scenario described in Joel, no matter what the original meaning of those passages would have been. Therefore, it is imperative that the interpreter not isolate one prophetic writing against others; rather, the interpreter should read the prophetic writing as part of a collection and see that it contributes to a consistent meaning. It is particularly important to look for redactional passages concerned with developing complex scenarios, in which different concepts can be reconciled.

As a fifth point, it is important that the redactors did not produce a flat coherence without deviations, tensions, and even contradictions. It must be borne in mind that the final text of the Book of the Twelve does not support the idea of one prophet overlooking the history of Israel from one point in time as, for example, occurs in Isaiah. Instead, the corpus presents twelve different prophets from different times. The overarching unity of this book is much more unsettled than in Isaiah. Whereas former exegetes hesitated to conceive the individual messages as part of a higher unity, postmodern thought is intrigued by that idea. The Book of the Twelve postulates that messages from different times, from persons with special insights, speaking from different backgrounds, when read together form a complex unity. The reader is forced to proceed from one prophecy to the next, each time imagining the hidden theme of the whole, the judging and restoring presence of God in history, from a different perspective. For the postmodern reader, it is not important to obtain a final coherent vision of what the book is about. Much more important is the arrangement of the prophecies in a way

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<sup>46</sup> See Schart, *Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*, 309–14.

that the single units present a distinct but memorable perspective, which at the same time needs to be balanced by the next unit. None of the prophecies needs to be criticized as long as the reader has delight in moving on. The trajectory of this complex process forms the canonical guidance with which the reader can achieve his or her own vision of the God of Israel.